# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1726
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2005
FAO REPORT ON UNDERNOURISHED PEOPLE
Zahedi Shri Mahboob

**Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) whether according to FAO the number of undernourished people in the world rose by 18 million between 1995-97 and 2000-2002, a sharp reversal from the decline of 27 million in the population of the hungry in the previous five years;

(b) if so, whether this reversal was largely due to china and India performing considerably worse in the second half of the decade than they did in the first half, as is the observation by FAO;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether "State of food insecurity in the world 2004" gives a grim picture that India alone had 221 million hungry people at the latest count as per FAO report;

(e) whether the most shocking part of the report is that in India 30% of children are born underweight;

(f) is it also a fact that in India, the cost of allowing iron deficiencies to continue at its level is estimated to be of the order of $ 30 billion; and

(g) if so, the Government's planning to bring down the number of under nourished people?

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b)&(c) The report has attributed the decline to China and India. However, as per the National Surveys, the number of undernourished adults declined from 49.2% males and 49.3% females in 1988-90 to 37% males and 39% females in 2000-01.

(d) The report indicates that 221.1 million people in India are undernourished, not hungry.

(e) There is no nationally representative study or surveillance system for low birth weight babies. However, as per UNICEF's State of World's Children Report-2004, it appears to be so.

(f) The FAO report gives an estimate of the cost of allowing current levels of iron deficiency to persist for another ten years as US $ 30 billion, based on the estimated reduction in GDP over those years. There is, however, no mechanism in place in the country to confirm or deny it.

(g) The Government of India is seized of the problem of malnutrition and has undertaken several initiatives to bring down the number of undernourished people through its different sectors viz. Agriculture, Food and Public Distribution, Health and Family Welfare, Education and Women and Child Development.